




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2024

## **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.49 pm): I too rise to talk on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. It probably should be called the ‘Kickback Bill’, the ‘Payback Bill’ or the ‘Pay-Off Bill’ because that is exactly what it is. It may surprise some members on the other side—although I have spoken about it numerous times in this House—that I was a union representative and a workplace health and safety representative back in the early eighties in a union called the ALAEA, the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers’ Association. I am sure members appreciate that working on aeroplanes can be quite a dangerous business. I totally agree with every other member who has spoken today that workers deserve the right to go to work in a workplace that is safe and go home at night without injury—or even death.

I start by rebutting some of what members opposite have said. I will start with the member for Bundamba. The member for Bundamba said that this bill was consulted on widely and that it raises the bar nationally. It certainly raises the bar nationally with, I am sure, their Labor Party in Canberra in terms of trying to play catch-up to protect their Labor mates. As far as widespread consultation goes, I understand that there was a so-called independent inquiry which played right into the Labor playbook. They always have rigged inquiries that come up with their desired result. In this case, it is exactly that. I understand that the independent committee members were not so independent. Member for Bundamba, we do not in fact know exactly what submissions were made or who made them because all of that information was suppressed. I would then assume that that means that the only people who were in fact consulted were the people who will benefit from this legislation—the union movement.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection from the member for Southern Downs. If the member could be bothered to read the entire report, that is what part of the report actually says. I would also like to comment quickly on what the member for Ipswich said—and I think I am quoting her correctly. She said that you cannot represent Queensland unless you are a member of a union or a member of the Labor Party. That is what they would really like to see—the only members of parliament in this place being union members or members of the Labor Party. That is how they try to rig this place. We see it constantly through the committee system and the way that this parliament operates. We saw it again today when this bill had a time limit and, all of a sudden, the government came in here playing silly games and extended the time limit for it saying, ‘This is an important bill and we have to talk for longer on it.’ Yes, it is an important bill. It is an important corruption risk for this state. We need to talk about it more. I encourage all members to come in here and talk about it. There are other bills that are important, too. Why is it that all of a sudden this bill needs more time? It is just a silly game that this government wants to play.

I return to the comments of the member for Bundamba. I was talking about this being a payback bill. The member for Bundamba has form in this place because he was quite involved in the mangocube affair. Members might remember from years ago that he submitted a list of board members to the member for Miller in a private email telling the member for Miller who should and should not be on

boards anymore. At the time, he was a senior policy adviser in the ETU in, I think, Sydney. The member for Bundamba can correct me if that is incorrect, but I understand he lived in Sydney and his payback was the seat of Bundamba. They imported him from Sydney and he became the member for Bundamba.

**Mr McCALLUM:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr HART:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Thank you, member for Burleigh.

**Mr McCALLUM:** I have a further point of order on relevance. I ask that the member be brought back to the long title of the bill. He has had a go.

**Mr HART:** On that point of order, I was rebutting some of the things—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, you do not need to make another point of order. Please remain relevant to the long title of the bill and resume your contribution.

**Mr HART:** This is a grubby bill providing payback to—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, could you withdraw that unparliamentary term?

**Mr HART:** I withdraw. This is a payback for all members opposite who rely on the union movement for their bread and butter and their seat in this House. There is no doubt about that. They have talked a lot about registered unions being the only ones that can represent members in industrial cases, workplace health and safety, access to work sites—all of the above—but then they prevented others from becoming registered unions. They blocked them. Then they go out and start calling them fake unions. These are people trying to represent members to get the best deal for them and provide them with a far better deal than the existing unions do. The fees are cheaper. Why are the fees cheaper? The fees are cheaper because these unions that are not allowed to register do not pay the kickbacks to the Queensland Council of Unions that then flow to the Labor Party. What does the Queensland Council of Unions do? I had a quick look at its website that states—

... advocate for improvements to industrial, work health and safety, and other laws impacting on workers ...

They are getting their way here, aren't they? In return, no doubt the QCU will be donating to the Labor Party. While I am talking about the QCU, I recently learned that the government gives the QCU a million dollars a year for its May Day march. In return, I am told that the QCU funnels funds back to the Labor Party.

The member for Bundaberg said in his contribution that the leaders of the union movement are elected by the members. Who elects the leaders of the QCU? They are not elected by rank-and-file members of the union, are they? They are elected by the leadership of the unions that kick back to them. That is who elects them. In all honesty, they are just as corrupt as this government.

This government has rigged a whole series of laws over the past nine years that it has been in government, and this is another one of those. It put in place donation laws that meant that normal rank-and-file people cannot donate more than \$4,000 or \$6,000 to political campaigns but that unions can donate whatever. We already heard from the member for Kawana that the AWU donated \$43,000 in the week before the last election. It is pure kickback.

I was quite taken back by some of the contributions from Labor members who seemed to think that the red unions are somehow aligned with the LNP and, if they are, that is apparently inappropriate yet we all live every day with the relationship between the Labor Party and the union movement—the CFMEU, the AWU, the education union, the nurses union and all of the other unions that are associated with the Labor Party and all of the members over there who are completely reliant on them. Then we have famous 'Blocker' telling the Premier exactly what he needs to be doing—

**Mr WALKER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Pause the clock.

**Mr WALKER:** Can we come back to the bill, please?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is your point of order on relevance?

**Mr WALKER:** Yes, it is on relevance.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member was interjecting while I was trying to speak. I thought there had to be silence when trying to get a point of order heard.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no further point of order. I did not hear any interjection from members on my left.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Everton, you are warned. Member for Burleigh, you have the call. You have 22 seconds to complete your relevant contribution to the bill.

**Mr HART:** It is a shame that the member for Mundingburra is not paying attention to the report because the report states—

**Mr WALKER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am offended by that direct reference. I want him to withdraw, please.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member?

**Mr WALKER:** I am offended by those remarks.

**Mr MILLAR:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Gregory, before I hear your point of order, I am going to seek some advice from the Clerk. Member for Mundingburra, I have heard your point of order and your request that the member for Burleigh withdraw his personal reflection on you. Member for Burleigh, I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr HART:** I withdraw. The report states—

... the ascension of Premier Steven Miles to his current position was extensively reported in the media. This dependence of Labor MPs upon union influence to retain their jobs is another clear conflict of interest.

It is in the report.

*(Time expired)*